

Remarks

Claims 1-24 were pending in the application. Claims 1, 12, 13 and 19-24 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 2-4, 6, 7 and 14-16 have been amended. No new matter has been introduced. Thus, claims 2-11 and 14-18 remain pending for the Examiner's consideration.

As an initial matter, Applicant thanks the Examiner for the telephone call of June 7, 2007, during which Applicant's representative pointed out two overlapping Office Actions had issued in this case. The Examiner kindly agreed to withdraw the overlapping Office Action, and issue a new Office Action that addressed the subject matter of both actions. The present July 9, 2007 Office Action corresponds to the Office Action requested as indicated in paragraph 1 on page 2.

Restriction Requirement

Applicant thanks the Examiner for consideration of elected Group 1 claims – *i.e.*, claims 1-18 and 21-24. Non-elected claims 19 and 20 have been cancelled. Applicant notes that claims 19 and 20 were included in the prior art rejection over U.S. Patent No. 2,802,388 (Luckenbach). Applicant believes this to be a typographical error, as claims 19 and 20 were not to be examined based on Applicant's election of Group 1. However, this typographical error is moot in view of Applicant's cancellation of claims 19 and 20 in the present application. Applicant reserves the right to file a divisional application on claims 19 and 20 to obtain full consideration of these claims.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter in claim 14. Claim 14 has been rewritten in independent form. Allowance of claim 14 is solicited.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, ¶2

Claim 24 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, ¶2 as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. Claim 24 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, ¶2 is solicited.

Prior Art Rejection

With respect to claims 1-18 and 21-24, two prior art rejections were raised. Claims 1-13, 15-17 and 21-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,543,117 (Claycomb). Claycomb, however, issued on April 8, 2003 which is less than one year prior to the present application's December 12, 2003 filing date. Thus, Claycomb is not available as prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

Claims 1-13, 15-18 and 21-24 also stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 2,802,388 (Luckenbach). Claims 1, 12, 13 and 19-24 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 2-11 are all now dependent upon allowable claim 14.

For at least the aforementioned reasons, the prior art rejections should be withdrawn.

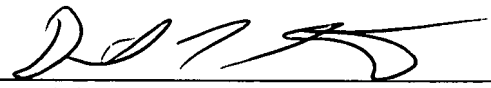
Conclusion

Should any fees be required with this filing, please charge such fees to Steptoe & Johnson LLP Deposit Account No. 19-4293.

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Respectfully Submitted,

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